PATTERNS OF POWER · THE IBERIA SERIES · VOLUME II

The Machine That Changed Hands

Iberia from the fall of the caliphate to the fall of Granada, 1031–1492: how order between enemies was bought by the year, how purifiers from the desert twice seized the word, and how the conquerors inherited the machine of the conquered

Thomas J. Bryan

with Claude (Anthropic)

2026

A Note on This Collaboration

This volume, like the series it belongs to, is a collaboration between a human author and an artificial intelligence. The analytical framework — the floor of force and the managed belief, the loaded words, the tested and the revealed, the traps of instrument and metabolism, the second inquiry into order among hierarchies, and the standing disciplines of the project — is Thomas J. Bryan's, developed across the collection this volume joins. The historical research, the verification of dates, figures and treaty terms against current scholarship, the architecture of the argument and the drafting of the text are the work of Claude, an AI model built by Anthropic, directed by the author's framework and revised under his disciplines. An earlier study of this material exists in the project's files, written before the series' vocabulary and methods had matured; this volume supersedes it. Where the period's own great theorist — Ibn Khaldun, whose concepts this series has long borrowed — is audited against the events that produced him, the audit is conducted under the same rule the project applies to itself: every framework is held as tested, never revealed. Whatever errors remain are the collaboration's own.

The Argument in Eight Parts

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I. The Market in Protection

After the caliphate's fall, order between thirty weak Muslim kingdoms and a few strong Christian ones was priced by the year — tribute for protection, Muslim gold building Cluny — and the era's greatest hero was the market's perfect creature: a Castilian knight who served a Muslim king and is remembered by an Arabic title.

II. The Foreclosure

In 1085 the chief protector stopped collecting rent on Toledo and took the asset — adopting the dhimma machine on day one and breaking its guarantees within two years. The transition window opened, and the last taifa kings chose, with open eyes, the rescuer who would devour them.

III. The Purifiers

The Almoravids: a desert movement that fused tribal cohesion with a closed legal canon, annexed al-Andalus under fatwas — and then burned the books of the very scholar whose authority had blessed the conquest. The contract of priced belief hardened; the Mozarabs were deported as a fifth column; the cycle Ibn Khaldun would theorise ran its first lap.

IV. The Mahdi's State

Ibn Tumart declared himself the infallible Rightly-Guided One, purged his own followers by the thousand, and built an empire whose doctrine abolished the dhimma outright — forced conversion at scale, Maimonides in flight, Averroes patronised and then sacrificed — the revealed posture run as a state, with the caliphal word escalated one step further than any before it.

V. The Avalanche

Las Navas de Tolosa, 1212, broke an apex that could not survive being wrong; one caliph then renounced the founding doctrine to buy a throne, and dissolved the word that held the empire. Thirty-six years took everything but Granada — at 711's speed, for 711's reason — while the conquerors' surplus sons collected the largest land distribution in the peninsula's history.

VI. The Machine Changes Hands

The surrender capitulations of the conquest are the Treaty of Tudmir with the signs reversed: Christian kings ran Muslim majorities on the conquered order's own instrument, clause for clause. The cleanest experiment in the series — and the discovery of the machine's true limit: it protects exactly what the protected are worth, and not one maravedí more.

VII. The Kingdom That Paid

Granada bought two hundred and fifty years — vassalage, tribute, troops for Castile's siege of Muslim Seville — and inscribed its palace ten thousand times with 'There is no victor but God.' Into it came Ibn Khaldun, the laboratory's

own theorist, to renew the tribute in his ancestors' city — and his great cycle is audited against the kingdom it could not explain.

VIII. The Word Built Afterwards

The 'Reconquista' — seven centuries as one crusade — was named in the nineteenth century; the restoration myth beneath it was manufactured in the ninth; the holy war was real, intermittent, and one instrument among several. The audit: the machine's neutrality proven, the desert empires' revealed signature confirmed, asabiyyah revised — and the strongest counter-position held for the volume where creed hardens into blood.

Preface

This is the second volume of the Iberia Series, and it covers the four and a half centuries from the abolition of the Cordoban caliphate in 1031 to the surrender of Granada in 1492 — the centuries in which the military gradient of the peninsula reversed, and the governing machine that Volume I anatomised passed, intact and running, from Muslim hands to Christian ones. Its title is its thesis. The first volume argued that the apparatus of rule — the priced subordination of one creed by another, the tax registers, the communal contracts, the gradient of conversion — has no theology of its own; this volume contains the proof, because here the experiment runs in reverse on the same ground, over the same families, and the machine does not notice.

Around that proof the volume assembles the period's other great instruction. It opens with a market in which Christian kings sold protection to Muslim kingdoms by the year and tithed the proceeds to French monks. It watches two revealed doctrines ride out of Africa to purify that market — one burning the books of the scholar who had legitimated it, the other built around a man who could not be wrong and who counted his first corpses among his own followers. It follows the avalanche after 1212, the adoption of the conquered order's own instruments by the conquerors, and the two hundred and fifty years in which the last Muslim kingdom in Iberia survived by pricing its own submission annually — building, on the proceeds, a palace inscribed thousands of times with the sentence that made the position bearable. It meets, in person and in his native laboratory, the medieval world's greatest structural historian, and audits his framework against the events that formed him. And it ends with the word — Reconquista — under which all of this was later filed, asking when the word was loaded, by whom, and what the filing deleted.

The volume is written, like its predecessor, for a reader new to structural history, and it holds its dead — on both sides of every line it draws — with the gravity they are owed.

PART I

The Market in Protection

Thirty weak hierarchies and a handful of strong ones discovered they could price order itself — and for sixty years, peace was a commodity with a published rate.

Thirty Small Cordobas and Their Problem

Volume I ended in 1031 with a committee of Cordoban notables formally retiring the caliphate, and the peninsula's Muslim south broken into some thirty successor statelets — the taifas, the "faction kingdoms," each a Cordoba in miniature, with its court, its poets, its palace built of caliphal spolia, and its army of whatever the fitna had left lying about. Several were brilliant: Seville under its poet-kings, Toledo, Zaragoza and Granada ran courts whose science and verse outshone anything in Latin Europe, and the eleventh century is in some respects al-Andalus's cultural noon. But brilliance is not a defence posture, and the taifas' structural situation can be stated in one sentence: they were rich, numerous, mutually hostile, and individually too weak to defend themselves — in a peninsula that also contained a handful of poor, hungry, militarily serious Christian kingdoms whose own consolidation was proceeding.

The standard expectation — the one the later single-crusade narrative writes backwards onto the period — is holy war. What the eleventh century actually produced, for two generations, was a market.

The Published Price of Peace

The instrument was called *parias*: annual tribute, paid in gold, by a Muslim taifa to a Christian king, in exchange for protection — protection, in the first instance, from the protector himself, and secondarily from the client's rivals of either faith, against whom the protector now had a revenue stream to defend. Fernando I of León-Castile (1035–1065) built the first great tribute network, drawing parias from Zaragoza, Toledo and Badajoz, and at times Seville; his testament treated the payment streams as heritable property, dividing them among his sons along with the kingdoms — Castile took Zaragoza's tribute, León took Toledo's, Galicia took Badajoz's and Seville's — as if the taifas were estates and their gold a rent-roll. The sums were transformative. The "old paria" of Zaragoza ran to something like ten thousand gold pieces a year; a settlement Alfonso VI extracted from Granada in 1075 ran to thirty thousand including arrears; and at the market's late extreme, the freelance warlord Rodrigo Díaz — we are coming to him — drew about a hundred and forty-six thousand dinars from the eastern taifas in just over two years. For scale: a nobleman's ransom in this Spain ran to five hundred or a thousand gold pieces. The historian Richard Fletcher's observation

deserves its place in the record — within a generation, the kings of the Christian north went from being among the poorest rulers in Latin Europe to being conspicuously among the richest, without conquering much of anything.

Where the gold went tells the rest. Fernando I pledged a thousand gold pieces a year — taifa gold — to the great Burgundian abbey of Cluny; Alfonso VI doubled the pledge in 1090, making it the largest standing donation Cluny ever received from any ruler, and the money helped raise the third abbey church at Cluny, the largest building in Latin Christendom. Sit with that arrangement for a moment, because it is the period in miniature: Muslim taxpayers in Seville and Zaragoza, taxed by their emirs beyond what Islamic law permitted (their own jurists kept the accounts of the violation, and the resentment), to pay tribute to a Christian king, who tithed it to a French monastery, whose monks prayed for the triumph of Christendom in a church Muslim gold was building. Every party to the chain found its link locally rational. No party controlled, or could even see, what the chain was doing as a whole.

Order Without a Shared Word

This series' second inquiry concerns order *among* hierarchies — how anything resembling peace exists between armed sovereignties that share no apex — and the parias system is its opening Iberian exhibit, a balance-of-power pax in miniature and at high legibility. Note what the system did, structurally, without anyone designing it. It converted the strong kingdoms' capacity for violence into revenue, which gave them a stake in their clients' continued existence: a taifa conquered is a tribute stream cancelled, and there is reason to think the Christian kings understood this perfectly well, since for decades they conspicuously declined conquests they could probably have made. It converted the weak kingdoms' wealth into safety, which let them go on being weak — funding poets instead of armies, since the army function had been outsourced northward. And it stabilised the whole field: raids became dunning visits, wars became renegotiations, and the frontier across which the later narrative would paint seven centuries of crusade was, for two generations, primarily a payments interface.

The project's standing discipline about the word "peace" applies with full force. This order was real — caravans moved, harvests stood, the frontier populations lived — and it was a protection racket, and both descriptions are true at once and must be held apart rather than allowed to cancel. The Christian kings did not invent a theory for it; they did not need one. But notice what the arrangement quietly conceded on both sides of the religious line: the Muslim kings, whose legitimating word made them defenders of the community of believers, were taxing believers to subsidise unbelievers' kingdoms; the Christian kings, whose word made them soldiers of Christ, were the salaried guarantors of Islamic states. The words flew on as before — both sides' clerics drew their stipends and managed the dissonance — but the conduct beneath the words was pure position, and the eleventh century knew it. The era's most famous career is the proof.

The Market's Perfect Creature

Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar entered legend as the Cid Campeador, Castile's national hero, the lance of Christendom — and entered it by way of a thirteenth-century epic and a long national afterlife that this volume's final part will weigh. The documented eleventh-century man is more instructive than the legend, precisely because nothing in his conduct makes sense inside the legend's frame and all of it makes sense inside this part's. A Castilian baron of the second rank, he rose as a commander under King Sancho II,

survived the king's murder, served the brother who succeeded him — the same Alfonso VI — and was twice exiled by him in the usual weather of court faction. An exiled magnate needed a paymaster, and the qualification he carried was the one the protection market priced highest: the demonstrated capacity for organised violence. So the Cid took service with the Muslim kings of Zaragoza, the Banu Hud, and spent the better part of a decade as the sword of a taifa — defeating, in their pay, the Christian armies of Aragon and Barcelona, and Muslim Lérida besides, while his own king collected tribute elsewhere. His title itself is the period's signature: *Campeador* from the Latin camp-fighter, and *Cid* from the Arabic *sayyid* — my lord — which is what his Muslim troops and subjects called him. Late in life he collected parias on his own account from the eastern taifas at the rates already quoted, and in 1094 took the city of Valencia and ruled it until his death as, in effect, a one-man taifa: a Christian warlord governing a Muslim city, through its qadi and its existing fiscal machine, under arrangements any emir would have recognised — the machine of Volume I running comfortably under a Castilian owner a century and a half before the great Christian conquests.

The point of the Cid, for this volume, is not cynicism — by the evidence he was conventionally pious, and his contemporaries of both faiths found his conduct unremarkable, which is itself the finding. The point is that the eleventh-century frontier was a labour market and a protection market before it was a war of religions, and the words — Christendom, the umma — sat above the market as accounting categories, invoked at need, suspended at need, fenced from conduct by exactly the mechanisms Volume I documented. What ended this equilibrium was not a prophet on either side. It was the market's own logic, reaching the point every protection market reaches: the moment when the strongest protector asks himself why he is collecting rent on assets he could simply own. That moment has a date and a city — 1085, Toledo — and it triggered everything this volume contains.

PART II

The Foreclosure

In 1085 the chief rent-collector decided to own the asset — and the whole field of hierarchies, Christian and Muslim, African and Iberian, reorganised around the transition.

The Client King

The taifa of Toledo in the early 1080s was the protection market's most advanced case: a kingdom so dependent on its protector that the protector was, in practice, already governing it. Its king, al-Qadir — grandson of an able dynasty, himself the kind of ruler weak states specialise in producing at the end — held his throne by Alfonso VI's leave and lost it anyway to his own subjects, who found the tribute burden and the humiliation unbearable; Alfonso restored him, for a price; the price deepened the burden; the cycle turned again. By 1084–85 the relationship had reached its logical terminus: Alfonso's army sat outside Toledo not to extort but to foreclose, and al-Qadir negotiated the surrender of the city in exchange for being installed — by Castilian arms — as client king of Valencia instead. The market's most valuable asset changed from rental to freehold on 6 May 1085, and Alfonso entered the old Visigothic capital on 25 May.

Two features of the foreclosure deserve the close attention this series gives to founding transactions, because both became templates.

The Terms, and the Two Years They Lasted

First: the terms. Toledo's Muslims were guaranteed their lives, their property, their liberty, their law and the practice of their religion, including possession of their principal mosque; those who preferred to leave could go with their movable goods; separate terms were struck with the city's large Jewish community. The reader of Volume I has seen this document before — it is the Treaty of Tudmir of 713, almost clause for clause, with the signs reversed. At the very first moment a Christian king found himself ruling a substantial Muslim population, he did not consult Christian doctrine for a governance model, for the sufficient reason that Christian doctrine did not contain one; he adopted the model that was lying on the ground, fully operational, with three and a half centuries of documentation — the priced subordination machine, under new management. This volume will watch the adoption become systematic, kingdom by kingdom, until Christian Iberia ran the largest subject Muslim populations in the world on instruments a Cordoban qadi could have audited. The machine, as the first volume argued and this one exists to prove, is belief-neutral: it serves whoever holds the floor.

Second: the violation, which became a template just as faithfully. Within about two years of the surrender — the king absent on business in the north — the new French archbishop of Toledo, Bernard of Sédirac, a Cluniac, together with Queen Constance, herself French, sent men into the guaranteed principal mosque, erected an altar, and hung a bell in the minaret. The chronicle tradition completes the story with a scene of royal fury and a delegation of Toledo's Muslims interceding — shrewdly — to pardon the violators rather than press a grievance against a queen and an archbishop they would have to live under; the scene is told centuries later and we flag it as chronicle. What is not chronicle is the outcome: the mosque became the cathedral, the guarantee was dead within the decade of its issue, and the pattern — generous capitulation terms at the moment of conquest, eroded or torn up once the conquered were demobilised and the balance of local force had shifted — entered the repertoire of Christian Iberia, where Volume III will find it operating, with world-historical consequences, in Granada after 1492. The instrument that priced subordination and the instrument that betrayed it crossed the religious frontier together, in the same wagon.

The new master's self-description completed the transaction's meaning. Letters attributed to Alfonso VI in a later Arabic chronicle — their authenticity is debated, and we say so — style him emperor of the two religions; debated or not, the title states exactly what the documented conduct claims: not a crusader extirpating Islam but an emperor proposing to *contain* both faiths, as the caliphs of Volume I had contained both, collecting from each according to its schedule. In 1085 the most powerful man in the peninsula was not trying to end al-Andalus. He was trying to become it.

The Transition Window

What 1085 actually destroyed was the equilibrium that had made the protection market stable. This series' second inquiry holds, with the power-transition literature, that the deadly moment in any field of hierarchies is neither settled preponderance nor settled balance but the *transition* between them — the window in which the rising power's trajectory is visible, the declining side's window for action is closing, and every actor's safest-looking move is the one that detonates the field. Toledo opened that window. To every remaining taifa king, the foreclosure announced that the market's implicit guarantee — that the protector preferred rent to ownership — was void: the gold bought postponement now, not protection, and the queue was visible (Alfonso pressed Zaragoza within the year; his demands on Seville escalated past tribute toward territory). The taifa kings faced the classic declining-power menu: submit and be absorbed piecemeal; combine and resist, which thirty mutually hostile courts had proven incapable of doing for fifty years; or invite an external balancer strong enough to check Castile — knowing that a balancer strong enough to check Castile was strong enough to swallow his hosts.

They knew. The chronicles preserve the deliberation at Seville, where al-Mu'tamid — the poet-king, the market's most cultivated client — was warned by his own son that the rescuer across the strait would not leave. The king's answer became one of the most quoted sentences medieval Iberia produced, and for once the fame is analytically deserved; he said he had no wish to be cursed from the pulpits of Islam as the man who handed al-Andalus to the unbelievers, and that he would *rather be a camel-driver in Africa than a swineherd in Castile*. Read it with this project's tools and it is not (or not only) piety; it is a precise statement of position logic under a legitimating word. A taifa king who submitted to Castile kept his palace and lost his word — became, in the eyes of the faith that licensed his rule, the swineherd of the proverb, illegitimate in every mosque from Lisbon to Samarkand. A king who called Africa might lose palace, throne and liberty, but would lose them *inside* the word, as a Muslim ruler overtaken by Muslim power. The word did not forbid

him to lose; it dictated which loss was survivable to his name. He chose the word over the palace with his eyes open, and got exactly what his son had priced: the rescue, the victory — and then the rescuer.

The rescuer is Part III, and he came from further away than Castile imagined: not from Morocco's cities but from the deep Sahara, at the head of a movement the likes of which this series has filed under its most dangerous classification. The protection market had been statecraft of the tested kind throughout — cynical, supple, priced, revisable. What answered al-Mu'tamid's letter was a revealed doctrine with an army.

PART III

The Purifiers

Out of the desert came an army built by a doctrine — and the doctrine read al-Andalus's sophistication as the disease it had been raised to cure.

The Movement From the Margin

The Almoravids — al-Murabitun, the men of the ribat, the fortified house of devotion — began a generation earlier and a world away, among the veiled Sanhaja Berber tribes of the western Sahara: camel nomads at the desert's edge, recently and shallowly Islamised, poor in everything but cohesion. A chief returning from pilgrimage brought back a Maliki jurist, Ibn Yasin, to instruct his people properly; the instruction became a discipline, the discipline a community, the community an army; and within a generation the movement had fused desert tribal solidarity with a stripped, rigorist, legalist Islam — the law as Malik's school codified it, enforced to the letter, against the lax, the deviant and the comfortable — and had conquered everything from the Senegal river to the Mediterranean, founding Marrakesh as its capital in 1070 under the emir Yusuf ibn Tashfin, a man of legendary austerity who wore wool, ate plainly, and commanded the most formidable force in the western Islamic world.

The reader should recognise the configuration, because the medieval Maghrib's greatest mind built a whole science on it, and this volume will meet him in person in Part VII. Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* would later formalise what the Almoravid trajectory exhibits: that group cohesion — *asabiyyah*, the solidarity of hard-living kin-groups at the margins — is the raw fuel of conquest; that religion is its great amplifier, fusing tribal loyalty into something that can take and hold cities; that the cohesive margin therefore periodically conquers the wealthy, comfortable, low-cohesion centre; and that the conquerors then settle into the centre's comforts and dissolve, in roughly three generations, into the next margin's prey. He was theorising his own region's archive — the Almoravids were his first great modern case and the Almohads, of Part IV, his second — and this volume will audit the theory at the close, where it will be found powerful and incomplete in instructive ways. For now, the configuration itself: when al-Mu'tamid's appeal crossed the strait, it reached a power at the precise apex of its cohesion curve, fused by a doctrine that classified the appellants — the wine-poured, philosophy-reading, tribute-paying taifa courts — somewhere between brothers in need and the disease itself.

The Rescue and the Repossession

Yusuf crossed in 1086 with the taifa kings as auxiliaries, and on 23 October, at Zallaqa near Badajoz — Sagrajas in the Christian sources — broke Alfonso VI's army with a battlefield method (massed drums, disciplined infantry squares, reserve committed at the hinge) that Latin Iberia had never met. The victory froze the Castilian advance for a generation; Toledo, however, did not return, and Yusuf went home with the strategic question open. It took four more years, a second crossing, and the spectacle of the taifa kings resuming their quarrels and their tribute negotiations the moment his back was turned, to close it. In 1090 he crossed a third time and answered it as the doctrine had answered it from the start: the protectors of al-Andalus would become its owners.

What the project wants noticed is the paperwork. The Almoravid annexation of the taifas — Granada 1090, Seville 1091 and the rest in train, al-Mu'tamid shipped to Morocco in chains, where the greatest Arabic poet of his age died in exile at Aghmat writing verses about his daughters spinning wool for wages — was conducted under *fatwas*: formal legal opinions, solicited from the jurists of al-Andalus and the Islamic east, certifying that the taifa kings had forfeited legitimate rule — by taxing beyond the law's schedule to pay tribute to unbelievers, by their impieties, by their failure of the community's defence — and that a righteous power was entitled, indeed obliged, to remove them. Among the authorities whose endorsement the Almoravids obtained was al-Ghazali himself, the most celebrated scholar in Islam. The canon of Volume I, Part V — installed by emirs to make rule cheap, the counterweight that could veto conduct but never absorb succession — here performed its largest operation yet: it deposed an entire political class, lawfully, on the petition of the army at the gates. The scholars had not changed their jurisprudence; the jurisprudence had simply found, for the first time, a client with the force to execute its judgements in full. Every legitimating canon is a loaded instrument waiting for that client.

And then the new owners demonstrated what kind of instrument they were. Within a few years of the annexation, the works of al-Ghazali — whose authority had blessed the conquest, but whose great synthesis wove law together with Sufi interiority and rational theology — were condemned by the Almoravid jurists as deviation, and burned publicly in the cities of al-Andalus and the Maghrib. The movement that had used the canon's most illustrious living voice to take a peninsula burned that voice's books to keep it. The project files this under the signature of the revealed posture, Volume I's most important diagnostic: a tested doctrine treats its authorities as evidence, to be weighed and revised; a revealed one treats them as instruments, to be cited while useful and destroyed when their complexity threatens the closed text. The Almoravids' canon had one book's worth of room in it. Everything else — including the man who had legitimated them — was fuel.

The Contract Hardens

For the machine of priced subordination, Almoravid rule meant something the dhimma's three and a half centuries of operation had not seen: management by men for whom the contract's pragmatic spirit was itself suspect. The letter mostly held — the Almoravids were Maliki legalists, and the dhimma was law — but it held at its hardest reading, and where war supplied a pretext it broke. The clearest case came in 1126: after an Aragonese king's deep raid through al-Andalus, during which Mozarab Christians of the Granada region had aided and in thousands joined the raiders, the Almoravid authorities obtained — again — a fatwa, and deported much of the remaining Mozarab population of the south to Morocco as a security risk. Volume I

traced the Mozarabs through four centuries: the community that had kept the creed while the gradient dissolved everything around it, that had policed its own martyrs to keep the contract stable. The contract's reward, under the purifiers, was collective punishment by legal instrument — the priced community re-priced as a fifth column. The gradient of Volume I had nearly finished its work in any case; after the deportations, the Christians *of* al-Andalus, as a substantial social fact, were finished. It is among this series' bleaker regularities that minorities are safest under confident orders and most exposed under purifying ones — confidence can afford a contract; purity reads every contract as contamination.

The Almoravid empire in al-Andalus lasted, in effective control, scarcely fifty years — almost exactly the span Ibn Khaldun's curve allots. The austerity dissolved in Seville's comforts on schedule; the veiled warriors became a tax-collecting garrison caste, resented as foreigners by the Andalusis they had rescued; the jurists who had blessed them transferred their disapproval to them; and the second generation faced revolts in every city while, in the Atlas mountains above Marrakesh, something far more formidable than another tribal coalition was assembling. The Almoravids had been a revealed doctrine of the *book* — rigorist lawyers with an army. What rose against them was a revealed doctrine of the *man*: a movement built around an infallible person, whose claim dissolved every contract, every school, every priced arrangement in the western Islamic world at once. The project's whole first inquiry argued that the most dangerous sentence in politics is *the text is closed and we are its executors*. Part IV concerns the only sentence more dangerous: *the text walks among you*.

PART IV

The Mahdi's State

A man declared himself the infallible Rightly-Guided One, built a state on the claim, abolished the dhimma, and made war on fellow Muslims as unbelievers. His empire patronised the greatest philosopher of the age — and forced the greatest Jewish mind of the age into the disguise of a convert.

The Claim

Ibn Tumart was a Masmuda Berber from the Sous valley, south of the Atlas — a sedentary highlander, note, not a Saharan: the new wave came from a different margin than the last. He went east as a student around the turn of the twelfth century; the official biography his movement later produced has him studying with al-Ghazali in person and receiving something like a commission, a scene modern scholarship treats as constructed legitimacy rather than itinerary — the movement back-writing a pedigree from the very authority the Almoravids had burned, which tells you what the burning had cost them. What is documented is the return: from about 1117 he came back west along the coast preaching command of right and prohibition of wrong with escalating aggression — smashing wine jars, upbraiding officials, denouncing the Almoravid jurists' anthropomorphist readings of scripture and the indecency of veiled men ruling unveiled women — until Marrakesh expelled him and he withdrew into the High Atlas among his own Masmuda.

There, around 1121, the movement crossed the line that separates reform from revelation. Ibn Tumart's followers recognised him — the staging of the recognition is preserved in the movement's own literature — as the Mahdi: the Rightly-Guided One of the end of days, the infallible imam, sinless, whose judgement is God's. Around the claim he built, with extraordinary administrative talent, a doctrine and a machine fused into one. The doctrine — *tawhid*, the absolute unity and transcendence of God, from which the movement took its name, al-Muwahhidun, the Unitarians, "Almohads" — declared the Almoravids not lax Muslims but *unbelievers*: their literalism was anthropomorphism, anthropomorphism was polytheism, and jihad against them was not civil war but holy war. The machine was a graded order of councils — the Ten, the Fifty, the trained cadre of talaba who memorised the Mahdi's creeds in Berber and Arabic and policed their recitation — a hierarchy of certified believers in concentric rings around the infallible centre. And when, in the late 1120s, defeat before Marrakesh strained the young movement, Ibn Tumart conducted the *tamyiz* — the Sifting: a purge, conducted through his lieutenants, in which the tribes of his own coalition were examined for sincerity and the doubtful were killed by their own kinsmen, by the thousand. The numbers are chronicle-grade; the institution is not. The movement counted its first corpses among its own members, before it had

won anything — which is, the project's first inquiry found from the Jacobins to the Khmer Rouge, not an aberration of the revealed posture but its signature working forward: a doctrine that cannot be wrong must locate every failure in insufficient fidelity, and fidelity is located in persons, and persons can be sifted.

Volume I introduced the Moses dynamic — a leader's situated improvisations canonised after his death and enforced by inheritors. Ibn Tumart ran the dynamic in fast-forward and in the first person: he wrote the canon, built its enforcement hierarchy, and conducted its first inquisition himself, within his own lifetime, upon his own followers. When he died around 1130, his lieutenant Abd al-Mu'min suppressed the death for as long as the transition required and then assumed the leadership as the Mahdi's caliph — and the word deserves a pause, because the count from Volume I, Part VII just moved. Baghdad, Cairo's Fatimids, Cordoba: three caliphs, each claiming the Prophet's succession. The Almohad title was something new — caliph *of the Mahdi*, deputy not of a dead Prophet's community but of an infallible man's mission — the universal word escalated one full step, from *the text's executors* to *the text's heirs*. Under it, Abd al-Mu'min took Marrakesh in 1147, extinguished the Almoravids, conquered the Maghrib to the gates of Egypt, and crossed into an al-Andalus where the Almoravid collapse had spawned a second generation of taifas. By the 1170s the peninsula's Muslim remainder was a province of the Mahdi's empire, governed from Seville beneath the new minaret — the Giralda, still standing — of an order whose doctrine had one further consequence the previous eleven centuries of this series' Iberian record had not seen.

The Contract Abolished

The dhimma — the priced toleration of Christians and Jews, the load-bearing instrument of Volumes I and II alike — rests doctrinally on a premise: that protected unbelief is a lawful category. Almohad doctrine deleted the category. The Mahdi had come to restore the pure monotheism underlying all revelation; after him, the movement's logic ran, the toleration of superseded creeds had no further warrant — and the option set offered to the Jews and remaining Christians of the empire, and not to them alone but to Muslim deviants as well, was conversion, exile or death. Enforcement varied with place, reign and need, as enforcement always does; the doctrine did not. The Christian communities of North Africa, already thin, were effectively ended. The Jewish communities of al-Andalus and the Maghrib — among the oldest and most accomplished in the world, the communities of Volume I's courtier-physicians and Hebrew golden age — were driven into exile, flight, or the specific torment the period made notorious: forced profession of Islam, publicly performed, privately disbelieved, generation after generation, under an authority that suspected the profession and policed the suspicion. Among the refugee families was that of a Cordoban judge named Maimon, whose son Moses — Maimonides — became in Cairo exile the greatest Jewish thinker of the Middle Ages, and whose pastoral letter to the forced converts of the Maghrib, written from safety to men still inside, weighed with terrible gentleness what a coerced formula does and does not destroy; this persecution was unlike the martyrdoms of old, he wrote, in that *the only coercion is to say something* — and a thing said under the sword, he counselled, God audits differently than a thing believed. The project brackets the theology, as it brackets all theology, and files the structure: a revealed doctrine had abolished the contract that priced belief, and in doing so had invented — within Islam, against Islam's own long practice — the apparatus Volume III will watch Christian Spain perfect three centuries later: forced conversion at scale, followed by an authority obsessed with the sincerity of the conversions it had itself coerced. The chain of custody is not direct, and the project does not claim it is; the structural rhyme is exact, and the lesson is the volume's deepest: the machinery of purity is, like the machinery of tolerance, belief-neutral. Whoever closes the text inherits it.

The Philosopher at the Mahdi's Court

And yet — the period's standing rebuke to every clean schema, including this project's — it was precisely this empire that staged the high noon of Aristotelian philosophy in the medieval west. The second Almohad caliph kept as court physician and intimate the Cordoban jurist-philosopher Ibn Rushd — Averroes — and commissioned from him the commentaries on Aristotle that, translated in conquered Toledo's workshops, would detonate in the Latin universities and carry Greek reason back into a Europe that had lost it; the doctrine of the infallible Mahdi and the most rigorous rationalism of the age were funded by the same treasury and dined at the same table. The combination was less paradoxical from inside than it looks from outside — Almohad tawhid fancied itself the rational creed, scornful of the lawyers' crude literalism, and an elite philosophy for the certified few above a memorised catechism for the mass is a configuration this series has met in other revealed orders — but it was unstable in exactly the way the framework predicts, and when the pressure came, it resolved as the framework predicts: late in the reign of the third caliph, with a Castilian war on and the jurists' goodwill suddenly priceless, Averroes was disgraced, his books burned, and the old man briefly banished to Lucena — the philosophy thrown to the canon's guardians as al-Mansur the hajib had once thrown al-Hakam's library to theirs, in Volume I, for the same purchase, at the same counter. (The deeper grounds of his disgrace are still argued among scholars; the structural transaction is not.) The empire that exiled Maimonides and humiliated Averroes had, in the same half-century, beaten Castile in the field — Alarcos, 1195, the worst Christian defeat since Zallaqa — and stood, at the century's turn, as the greatest power either shore of the western Mediterranean had seen since the caliphate of Volume I.

It had also, in the manner of revealed orders, made a promise no order can keep: that it could not be wrong. The third generation was reaching its Khaldunian station; the talaba hierarchy had become a hereditary aristocracy policing a creed it no longer burned with; the sifted tribes remembered the Sifting. The test of the promise came on a specific July morning in 1212, on a plateau in the Sierra Morena, against an enemy that had spent the same decades building something the Almohads had not: an alliance, under a word borrowed from beyond the Pyrenees. It is the most famous battle in Iberian history, and the avalanche it released buried al-Andalus in thirty-six years. It is also — and this is Part V's business — the moment the Christian side of the peninsula stopped running its wars as the protection market's heirs and started running them, officially, as crusade.

PART V

The Avalanche

One battle did not conquer al-Andalus. It broke an apex — and then the cities negotiated, one by one, exactly as they had in 711, while the conquerors' surplus sons collected kingdoms.

The Imported Word

The Christian kingdoms that faced the Almohads were not the hungry tribute-farmers of Part I, and the difference was only partly material. Across the twelfth century a word had been imported into the peninsula and bolted onto its wars: *crusade*. The papacy had begun granting Jerusalem-grade indulgences for Iberian campaigns as early as 1089; the new international military-religious orders were copied locally — Calatrava founded in 1158, Santiago by 1170, Alcántara in train — standing armies of vowed knight-monks holding the frontier castles as corporations that never died, never partitioned among heirs, and never stopped; and the frontier war acquired a theology, a bureaucracy of vows and indulgences, and a recruiting reach that ran to Rome and beyond. The project pauses to be fair in both directions, because Part VIII will weigh a modern word against this record and the scales must be honest: the eleventh century's conduct was market conduct, as Part I documented — but the crusading frame of the twelfth and thirteenth was not a later invention either. It was real, contemporary, institutional — a revealed-tinged frame (the war as God's, the land as Christ's patrimony to be recovered) imported onto the Christian side at almost the same moment the Almohad frame closed over the Muslim side. For roughly a century, uniquely in the period this series covers, *both* sides of the Iberian frontier were officially operating under closed sacred warrants. That symmetry's harvest is this part.

When the fourth Almohad caliph massed the empire's strength for a decisive blow, Innocent III — the most formidable pope of the Middle Ages — proclaimed a crusade, and for once the peninsula's Christian apexes combined: Castile, Aragon and Navarre in person, Portugal's knights, the military orders, and a mass of ultramontane crusaders (most of whom, the chronicles note with some satisfaction, went home before the battle, scandalised that the Castilians kept sparing Muslim non-combatants — the local war had local rules the imported word found insufficiently pure). On 16 July 1212, at Las Navas de Tolosa in the passes of the Sierra Morena — a shepherd, says the legend the reader should hold as legend, showed the kings an unwatched path around the blocked defile — the coalition broke the Almohad army, broke it utterly, the caliph fleeing to Seville and thence to Africa, dead within a year.

Why the Avalanche Fell

Battles, this series has insisted from its first volume, do not by themselves destroy orders; 1086 and 1195 had produced catastrophic Christian defeats and no Christian collapse. What Las Navas destroyed was an *apex* — and a revealed apex, which breaks differently. The Almohad claim was infallibility: God's guidance manifest in the Mahdi's line and proven on the field, as the dynasty's own victory-names had proclaimed. A tested dynasty loses a battle and adjusts; the Mahdi's deputy could not lose the greatest battle of the age and remain, in full, the Mahdi's deputy. What followed in the empire was the fitna of Volume I replayed at imperial scale: succession wars among Almohad princes, the African provinces seceding under new dynasties, the talaba aristocracy splitting — and, in 1229–30, an episode the project would scarcely credit from a worse-documented century: the caliph al-Ma'mun, bidding for the throne with Castilian mercenaries hired from the enemy of Las Navas, publicly *renounced the doctrine* — repudiated the Mahdi's infallibility from the pulpits, struck his name from the coinage and the khutba, and told the faithful, in effect, that the founding claim had been an error. A revealed order attempting, at the apex, to convert itself to a tested one in a single proclamation: the experiment ran exactly once, and the result was that the word dissolved and the empire with it — the legitimating claim was the load-bearing member, and the renunciation that was meant to buy one prince a throne cancelled the only warrant the whole structure had. Within a decade al-Andalus had fallen out of the empire into a third generation of taifas; within two, the African empire itself had been carved up by its own marcher dynasties.

And so the avalanche, when it came, fell on a fractured field, and it moved at a speed the reader of Volume I has seen before and now knows how to read. Fernando III of Castile-León took Cordoba in 1236 — the caliphal city itself, betrayed at a wall by local dissidents and surrendered on terms, its people marching out with what they could carry. The chronicles record that the bells of Santiago de Compostela, which al-Mansur's captives had carried south on their shoulders in 997 to hang as lamps in the Great Mosque, were now carried back north to Compostela on the shoulders of Muslim captives — the appointment Volume I made, kept after two hundred and thirty-nine years, the symmetry so perfect that one suspects the chroniclers of arranging it, and says so, while noting that this is precisely the kind of arrangement thirteenth-century victors did in fact stage. Jaime I of Aragon had already taken Mallorca (1229) and entered Valencia city in 1238 on negotiated terms; Murcia submitted as a protectorate in 1243–44; Jaén fell in 1246 by a treaty that is Part VII's foundation stone; and in 1248, after a two-year siege assisted — the reader will want this held until Part VII — by the Muslim king of Granada in person, Fernando III entered Seville, the Almohad capital of al-Andalus, whose population was expelled wholesale. In thirty-six years, everything but the mountain kingdom of Granada was gone. The speed is the same evidence it was in 711, with the signs reversed: conquests of this velocity are not won by the conqueror's strength but forfeited by the loser's apex — the cities, abandoned by any imperial centre, negotiated severally, as Theodemir had negotiated, and for the same reason: there was no longer anything above them to hold out for.

The Conquerors' Surplus

One more mechanism was driving from the Christian side, and the project names it because it recurs from China's examination queues to England's younger sons and will, in Volume III, people the conquest of America: elite overproduction. Christian Iberia's warrior aristocracy reproduced faster than its land supply; partible custom and dynastic accident multiplied claimants; and the kingdoms' internal history whenever the

frontier was quiet — the fratricidal wars of Fernando I's sons, of Alfonso VI's heirs, of every generation's surplus infantes and ambitious houses — shows what the surplus did when it had no external outlet. The frontier was the outlet: a standing mechanism for converting dangerous surplus elites into landed ones, by conquest, at the expense of the only neighbours it was lawful to expropriate. The fueros — the charter privileges that made frontier towns into subsidised opportunity zones — and the military orders — which gave landless knights a corporate route to commanderies — institutionalised the vent. Las Navas opened the valve to its stop: the thirty-six-year avalanche was, among everything else, the largest land-and-office distribution in the peninsula's history, an entire new aristocracy and church province carved out of al-Andalus's body. The reader should mark the mechanism and its dates, because Volume III turns on what happened when, in 1492, the vent closed with the surplus still flowing — and an ocean opened beside it.

The conquest left the conquerors with the situation this whole series pivots on, the situation of 713 mirrored: a thin military elite in possession of vast, rich, irrigated lands inhabited by an enormous population of the other faith — peasants, craftsmen, the human machinery that made the land worth owning. Doctrine offered the conquerors nothing useful; the crusading word that had taken the cities had no clause for running them. What they did is Part VI, and the reader already knows what it was, because this series has been predicting it since the dhimma was first anatomised: they picked up the machine.

PART VI

The Machine Changes Hands

Christian kings ruling Muslim majorities adopted the conquered order's own instrument, clause by clause — the cleanest controlled experiment in this series on whether governing machinery has a creed.

The Capitulations

The surrender instruments of the thirteenth-century conquests survive in quantity, above all from the Crown of Aragon's absorption of Valencia, and reading them beside the Treaty of Tudmir of 713 is the closest thing comparative history offers to a controlled experiment. The Muslims who capitulated — *mudéjares*, the later term ran, from an Arabic root for "those permitted to remain," the tamed, the domesticated; the word itself is the contract seen from above — were guaranteed, town by town and valley by valley: their religion and its public practice; their mosques and the call to prayer (locally negotiated, sometimes restricted); their own law, administered by their own qadis, in their own disputes; their property; their communal self-government through the *aljama*, the organised community answering collectively for its obligations; and fixed taxes — in a formula that recurs like a refrain, the same renders they had paid to their former kings, the conquerors stepping into the Muslim fisc's shoes without re-cobbling them. In exchange: loyalty, tribute, disarmament by degrees, and codified subordination — no proselytising among Christians, no Muslim authority over Christians, deference rules, dress rules, the familiar schedule. Every clause is the dhimma, signs reversed. The protected creed and the taxing creed have swapped seats; the chair, the table, the ledger and the price are the same furniture. Castile ran the same instrument where it retained Muslims — Toledo's terms in 1085 had been its first draft — and royal law eventually codified the whole arrangement: Alfonso X's great mid-century code, the Siete Partidas, sets out, in nearly symmetrical titles, that Jews and Moors are to live among Christians unharmed, keeping their law and their property, precisely so long as they keep its disabilities — a Christian jurist's restatement, conscious or not, of the jurisprudence of the conquered.

The project stated at the close of Volume I that a technology serving both sides of a holy war with equal efficiency is not an expression of either side's truth, and rested the claim on a promissory note. This part is the note paid. The same population — literally the same families, in Valencia and Murcia — that had lived as taxed Christians under Muslim rule in the eighth century and as taxed Muslims' descendants under the gradient ever since, now lived as taxed Muslims under Christian rule, administered through the same communal organs, paying substantially the same renders, under guarantees drafted from the same template, breached by the same slow erosion. Nothing about the machine required either faith to be true, and nothing about either faith prevented its faithful from operating the machine the moment they held the floor. It is the

central empirical finding of the Iberia Series, and the series will spend Volume III watching the one force that finally *did* break the machine — which was not a conquest, but a doctrine that, like the Mahdi's, deleted the category of priced unbelief.

The Gradient Reversed, and the Limits Found

With the machine came its properties, and the reader can write this section's headings unaided. The gradient now ran north: conversion to Christianity cleared the Mudéjar's special taxes and disabilities, opened careers and marriages, and worked on his grandchildren whatever it failed to work on him — slowly, for the Mudéjar communities were dense, self-governing and well-defended by their economic indispensability, but in one direction only. The two communities of Volume I, Part II, reappeared in mirror image: converts discovering that baptism cleared the legal ledger and not the social one (Volume III's entire tragedy is furled inside that discovery, and the project asks the reader to hold it); and the unconverted drifting culturally toward the prestige order — Mudéjar craftsmen building Christian Iberia's palaces and churches in the style that bears their name, the *mudéjar*, Islamic geometry in the service of the Cross, formation drifting below belief exactly as Alvarus had watched it drift in ninth-century Cordoba, with the current reversed.

The limits of the machine were found quickly too, and the finding split the peninsula's two crowns in a divergence this series treats as a natural experiment in its own right. In 1264 the Mudéjars of Castilian Andalusia and Murcia rose — coordinated, the sources say, with Granada — and Castile's answer, once the rising was broken, was not renegotiation but deletion: mass expulsion of the Muslim population from the Guadalquivir heartlands, the emptied towns and countryside thrown open to Christian settlement that took generations to fill the gap, where it ever did. Castile could afford the deletion, or believed it could: its conquest had been settler-heavy, its frontier with Granada made every Mudéjar a hypothetical insurgent, and its Muslims were concentrated where rebellion had just proven the contract unstable. Aragon's Valencia, by contrast, kept its Muslim majority-districts working for two and a half more centuries — through revolts harsher than Castile's — because the Valencian economy was the Mudéjars: the irrigated huertas ran on their labour and expertise, the nobility's rents were denominated in them, and the kingdom's standing proverb priced the matter without sentiment — *who has a Moor has gold*, the saying ran (we flag it as proverb, which is to say, as the purest evidence there is). Where the subordinated population was the metabolism, the contract held against every strain; where it was merely a population, the contract held until the first strain. The machine, this series concludes, is belief-neutral but not interest-neutral: it protects exactly as much as the protected are worth to the floor's owner, and not one maravedí more.

By 1300 the great absorption had found its equilibrium: Christian kingdoms running Muslim communities on Muslim-built instruments, a frontier stabilising along the Granadan mountains, the crusading word cooling back into ceremony as the market words of Part I — tribute, truce, vassalage — returned to govern actual conduct. For the conquered who remained, the dhimma's old wisdom from the inside applied entire, and the Mudéjar centuries are its second demonstration: communities can live long, productive, even flourishing lives inside a priced subordination — and the price is never stable, because it is set by the other party's interests, and interests move. One Muslim polity had escaped the avalanche to negotiate from sovereignty rather than subordination, and had bought, with extraordinary skill, what no aljama could buy: two and a half centuries. Its purchase, its palace, and the theorist it briefly employed are Part VII.

PART VII

The Kingdom That Paid

Granada survived for two hundred and fifty years by selling the one commodity it had — its own submission, annually renewed — and built, on the proceeds, a palace inscribed ten thousand times with the words "There is no victor but God."

The Client's Masterpiece

The founder of the last Muslim state in Iberia began as one warlord among the dozen scrambling over the Almohad wreckage: Muhammad ibn Yusuf ibn Nasr, called Ibn al-Ahmar, a frontier soldier of modest lineage from Arjona, proclaimed there in 1232. His ascent was conducted with a positional cold-bloodedness that the project, after two volumes of this peninsula, records without surprise: finding himself outmatched by the era's strongest Muslim claimant, Ibn Hud, he submitted; finding submission unprofitable, he assisted *Fernando III of Castile* against Cordoba in its fatal year of 1236 — a Muslim emir helping the Christian conquest of the caliphal city, against a Muslim rival; and in the years following he gathered Granada, Málaga and Almería into a compact mountain kingdom while the avalanche consumed everything around it. In 1245–46, with Fernando's siege closing on Jaén and no relief possible, he executed the move that defined the next quarter-millennium: he rode to the Castilian camp, kissed the king's hand, surrendered Jaén — and converted his kingdom, by the Treaty of Jaén of March 1246, into a vassal state of the Crown of Castile: a twenty-year truce, an annual tribute of 150,000 maravedís (which became, the records suggest, the single largest item of Fernando's revenue — the conquered financing the conqueror, the parias of Part I reborn at kingdom scale), military service on demand, and attendance at the Castilian court as a vassal among vassals.

The service clause was called in almost at once, and produced the tableau this volume offers as its concentrated image: in 1248, at the siege of Seville — the capital of al-Andalus, the city of al-Mu'tamid and the Giralda — the banners of the Muslim king of Granada flew in the besieging army of Castile, and Granadan troops helped extinguish Muslim Seville in fulfilment of feudal duty. And then the archives did what archives do, and the project asks the reader to watch them do it, because this is how the memory that Part VIII anatomises gets manufactured at the source: the Christian records state the vassalage in full feudal form — the homage, the hand-kiss, the tribute schedule; the Arabic sources of the Nasrid tradition pass over the vassalage in silence or restyle the relationship as treaty between equals, and Seville goes unmentioned. Neither archive lies, exactly. Each records what its position can afford to remember. Seven centuries of historiography inherited the two ledgers and called the discrepancy a puzzle; this series calls it the purest specimen in the collection of memory sorted by position — and notes that the dynasty which could not

afford to write down what it had done at Seville could afford even less to stop doing it, for the next two hundred and fifty years.

Two Hundred and Fifty Priced Years

For that is what the Nasrid state was, structurally: the protection market of Part I, reconstituted with a single client and a single protector, and run — by the client — with a sophistication the eleventh-century taifas never approached. Granada's survival kit, assembled across the dynasty's first century, deserves itemising, because each item is a mechanism this series has met and the kit as a whole explains an anomaly that, as we shall see, embarrassed the greatest theorist the period produced. The tribute, first: paid, lapsed, renegotiated, resumed — the truce-and-tribute cycle was the kingdom's heartbeat, and its diplomats became the Mediterranean's masters of the renewable surrender. Geography, second: a fortified mountain perimeter dense with castles, expensive to attack in any year the attacker's purse could be satisfied more cheaply at the counter. The African counterweight, third, and handled like fire: the Marinid successors of the Almohads in Morocco could be invited in just far enough to frighten Castile into better terms, and the Nasrids learned — having watched two African rescues become two African annexations in Parts III and IV — to keep the rescuer garrisoned at the strait and no deeper; when in 1340 the last great Marinid invasion was annihilated by Castile and Portugal at Río Salado, the African option closed, and Granada adjusted its premiums accordingly. And fourth, the protector's own convulsions: every Castilian succession war and noble league — and the fourteenth century supplied them in abundance, climaxing in the fratricidal Trastámara war in which the king of Castile was stabbed to death by his half-brother in a tent at Montiel in 1369, a war in which Granada duly fielded troops for the losing legitimate side — was oxygen for the client, years of lapsed tribute and recovered border castles. Granada survived, in sum, not by cohesion but by *pricing*: it made itself, year upon year, marginally cheaper to tolerate than to destroy.

On the proceeds — and on a dense, refugee-swollen economy of silk and skilled trades, the human capital of fallen al-Andalus compressed into one province — the dynasty built the most articulate building this series has encountered: the Alhambra. The red palace-fortress above Granada is, the project suggests, best read as Volume I read the Great Mosque of Cordoba — as a legitimacy instrument in masonry, but one whose message has inverted with the position of its builders. The caliphate's architecture had proclaimed power's presence: axes, mass, the apex enthroned at the summit of ascending ceremony. The Nasrid palace proclaims power's *absence*, transfigured: courts of water and shadow, structure dissolved into lace and light, and, woven into the plaster in endless calligraphic repetition — thousands of instances, wall upon wall — the dynasty's motto: *There is no victor but God*. Scholars trace the formula's adoption to the dynasty's founder; the chronicle-grade tradition has Ibn al-Ahmar replying with it to acclamations of "conqueror" as he rode home from the surrender of Jaén — or, in the darker variant, from the Christian siege lines at Seville. Flag the anecdotes; the choice itself is documented, and it is the most precise self-description any regime in this series has inscribed on its own walls: a kingdom whose every victory was purchased, whose sovereign kissed a Christian king's hand as a term of trade, covering its palace — the way a man repeats what he is trying to believe — with the one sentence that made the position bearable: no earthly victor is truly a victor; the tribute is not a verdict; God's account is kept elsewhere. The word, which Volume I watched legitimate conquest and Volume II watched legitimate purification, here performs its subtlest service in the whole series: it legitimates *survival* — it makes a quarter-millennium of priced submission inhabitable to the

submitters. Whether that service is dignity or anaesthesia the project does not rule; it notes only that no hierarchy in this collection has lived long without it.

The Theorist in the Laboratory

Into this kingdom, in December 1362, came a thirty-year-old Tunisian office-holder fleeing Maghribi court politics: Abd al-Rahman ibn Khaldun. The project has been borrowing his concepts for two volumes; it now meets him in person, in the one setting that could have produced him, and asks the reader to see how completely the man is a product of the laboratory he would theorise. His family were Andalusi patricians of Seville who had read the avalanche correctly and emigrated to Tunis *before* 1248 — he was, that is, the great-great-grandson of the catastrophe this volume has been narrating, raised in its refugee establishment. His career to 1362 had been one long instruction in the cycle: service, imprisonment and intrigue under three Maghribi dynasties — each of them a successor-fragment of the Almohad empire, each visibly somewhere on the curve from desert cohesion to palace dissolution. And in Granada, where the emir Muhammad V owed him a debt from a shared exile in Fez, came the episode that compresses the entire volume into one man's week: in 1364 the Muslim king of Granada sent Ibn Khaldun as ambassador to Pedro of Castile, to ratify a peace — that is, to renew the priced arrangement of 1246 — and the embassy was received at Seville, his ancestors' city, in the Alcázar, which the Christian king was at that moment rebuilding in the *mudéjar* style, with Muslim craftsmen and Arabic inscriptions, into the palace that still stands. A Muslim scholar, descended from Sevillian exiles, negotiating a Muslim kingdom's tribute-truce with a Christian king, in a Christian palace being built by Muslim hands in the Islamic manner on the site of the Almohad palace his family had served: every thesis of this series — the machine's neutrality, the word's locality, formation outliving sovereignty, order priced between enemies — stood in one room, in 1364, and looked at itself. Pedro, completing the figure, offered the ambassador his family's confiscated Sevillian estates back if he would enter Castilian service. Ibn Khaldun records the offer in his autobiography, and the refusal. He gave the polite reasons. The project does not presume to supply the others.

Within the year, Granadan court jealousies — his friend the vizier Ibn al-Khatib had begun to find the emir's affection for the newcomer alarming — eased him back to Africa with honours, and the rest of the career ran its Khaldunian course: minister, prisoner, refugee, and at last, in a castle in Algeria in the 1370s, the retirement in which he wrote the *Muqaddimah*, the introduction to history that out-thought every history it introduced. Its engine, the asabiyyah cycle, the reader has now watched run twice at full scale: the cohesive margin conquers the soft centre under a religious amplifier; rules; softens; dissolves in three generations before the next margin. The Almoravids ran the curve in some seventy years, the Almohads in barely ninety: the theory, audited against its own native data, performs superbly. But the project's discipline requires auditing it against the data it sits inside as well, and there it strains, instructively, twice. Granada — the state Ibn Khaldun personally served — is its standing anomaly: a regime with *no* asabiyyah to speak of, a refugee mosaic under a parvenu dynasty, which outlived both desert empires combined, by substituting market position for cohesion; longevity, the Nasrid case says, can be *bought*, and the theory has no ledger for purchase. And Castile — the power that finally ended the experiment — strains it from the other side: the Christian kingdoms' rise ran not on tribal solidarity burning down in three generations but on the slow accretion of impersonal instruments — chartered towns, undying military orders, law codes, councils — cohesion banked in institutions rather than blood, which is precisely the variable this series' first inquiry ended by elevating, and which the *Muqaddimah*'s cycle, built from a world where institutions rarely outlived

dynasties, systematically underweights. The greatest structural mind of the Middle Ages, formed in the laboratory's southern wing, theorised the wing he could see. The audit is Part VIII's — along with the question of what the northern wing, once it had won everything, chose to remember about how.

PART VIII

The Word Built Afterwards

The seven-century crusade that organises every schoolbook map of medieval Iberia was named, as a single continuous enterprise, in the nineteenth century. What was medieval was something stranger — and the difference is this volume's last lesson.

The Name and Its Birthday

The word under which this volume's entire period is filed — *Reconquista*, the Reconquest: seven hundred and eighty-one years, Covadonga to Granada, one nation recovering its soil from the invader in a single sacred enterprise — has a documented birthday, and it is not medieval. No medieval writer uses the term for the struggle; it surfaces in Spanish historiography in the eighteenth century, and its consolidation as *the* name and frame of the Middle Ages — the semantic fusion of "restoration," "fatherland" and "nation" into one master narrative — is the work of the second half of the nineteenth, the high noon of Romantic nationalism, when the new Spanish state, like every new European state, was furnishing itself a medieval pedigree. The scholarship that established this — the historiographical excavations of recent decades, above all Martín Ríos Saloma's — can be summarised in this series' own vocabulary without distortion: *Reconquista* is a loaded word, loaded in the nineteenth century, and back-fired into the eighth.

The conduct record this volume has assembled is the case against the frame, and it needs no rhetorical assistance — merely listing. The eleventh century's Christian kings farmed the taifas as revenue and tithed Muslim gold to Cluny. The national hero of Castile spent his prime as the salaried sword of a Muslim dynasty, beating Christian armies, and is remembered by the Arabic title his Muslim subjects gave him. The conqueror of Toledo styled himself — if his chancery's Arabic is genuine, and perhaps more tellingly even if it is not — emperor of both religions. The kingdom of Granada was a sworn vassal of Castile whose troops helped extinguish Muslim Seville; Castilian pretenders hired Granadan lancers against Christian rivals for a century after; and across the whole seven centuries, the years of formal truce, tribute, alliance and plain coexistence vastly outnumber the years of campaign. None of this was hidden; all of it was in the chronicles the nineteenth century read. A single continuous war of national liberation is not what the record contains. It is what the record was *for*, once a nation needed one.

What Was Genuinely Medieval

But the project's discipline cuts both ways, and the fairness owed here is owed in full, because the easy modern debunking — "the Reconquista was invented yesterday; the Middle Ages knew only pragmatic coexistence" — is itself a position-sorted memory, the mirror error. Two medieval realities must be entered on the other side of the ledger.

The first this series has met before, in Volume I, at its birth: the *idea* of a lost Gothic Spain awaiting restoration is not a nineteenth-century product but a ninth-century one — manufactured, the project argued, in the court of Alfonso III of Asturias around the 880s, when chroniclers a hundred and seventy years after the conquest furnished a mountain kingdom of Basque and Cantabrian chiefs with a Visigothic succession, made the skirmish at Covadonga a foundation, and declared the kings of Oviedo heirs of Toledo. That was a loaded word being loaded in real time — legitimacy for a dynasty's expansion, dressed as recovery of a patrimony — and it never afterwards left the peninsula's repertoire: the neo-Gothic claim resurfaces in charters and chronicles whenever a Leonese or Castilian crown reaches for imperial style. The nineteenth century did not invent the restoration myth; it nationalised a dynastic one, swapping the Gothic kings' patrimony for the Spanish people's soil. The manufacture was medieval. The *universalisation* was modern.

The second is the crusading century of Part V, which no honest account may minimise: from the late eleventh century the peninsula's wars were formally sacralised — indulgenced, vowed, preached — and at Las Navas a genuinely international crusade fought under papal proclamation; for a hundred years and more, the closed sacred frame governed not just memory but mobilisation, treasure and law. The accurate statement, then, is not that the holy war was invented afterwards. It is that the holy war was *real, intermittent, and one instrument among several* — taken up when position favoured it, laid down when position favoured truce and tribute, coexisting at every moment with the market conduct listed above — and that what the modern word performed was the deletion of the intermittence: the welding of episodes into an essence, of an instrument into an identity, of seven centuries of mixed conduct into one unbroken crusade. A loaded word does not need to fabricate; it needs only to select and fuse. And once fused, the word worked forward, as loaded words do: the *Reconquista* of the textbooks underwrote the new nation's self-image, was canonised under Franco as the regime's founding myth — the Crusade reborn in his own war's propaganda — and circulates today in European far-right traffic as a live political program. A word loaded in the 880s for a dynasty, reloaded in the 1880s for a nation, fires still. The reader of this series' England and America volumes knows the type; Iberia's specimen is merely the longest-burning.

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What the Case Confirms, What It Strains

The audit, holding the project's theses as tested and never revealed.

Confirmed, first and centrally: the machine is belief-neutral — and this volume supplied the proof Volume I could only promise. The same instrument of priced subordination ran under both creeds, over the same families, on the same ground, with the same clauses, the same gradient, the same erosion of guarantees; and its limits proved to be set by interest, not theology — held where the subordinated were the economy

(Valencia), deleted where they were merely a risk (Andalusia after 1264). Confirmed, second: the tested-versus-revealed diagnostic, run at state scale on both sides of the strait. The protection market, the Nasrid survival kit, the capitulation system — tested statecraft throughout: cynical, revisable, corpse-poor. The two desert empires — revealed: a closed canon burning its own authoriser's books; an infallible founder sifting his own followers by the thousand; the dhimma contract deleted by doctrine; and the empires' failure modes matching the posture exactly, down to al-Ma'mun's unrepeatable experiment of renouncing the founding claim, which demonstrated that in a revealed order the claim *is* the structure. Confirmed, third: the word-mechanics of Volume I, extended — the caliphal title escalated to the Mahdi's, the Nasrid motto legitimating survival itself, and the loaded-word lifecycle documented at both ends, the ninth-century loading and the nineteenth-century reloading of the same restoration myth.

Audited, with revisions adopted: Ibn Khaldun's asabiyyah, the period's own native framework, which this volume tested on its home data. Verdict: the cycle is real and powerful — two empires ran it to schedule — but it is a theory of one fuel only. It cannot price Granada, which bought with market position the longevity it lacked in cohesion; and it underweights Castile-Aragon, whose rise banked cohesion in undying institutions — orders, charters, codes — rather than in blood that thins. The project therefore takes asabiyyah aboard as a special case of its own first inquiry's revised variable: what endures is not solidarity but *jurisdiction* — arrangements that outlive their founders' feelings. Solidarity is how orders are born; institutions are how they refuse to die.

For the second inquiry, this volume's largest deposits: the parias system as a complete miniature of priced order among hierarchies — genuinely stabilising, genuinely extortionate, the entanglement that the inquiry's Tacitus discipline insists be held apart and never resolved; and the two transition windows, 1085 and 1212, as the case studies in which equilibrium broke — both detonated, note, not by the rising power's appetite alone but by the falling side's rescue options, each rescue importing a power that devoured the rescued. And the grim accounting, attempted honestly: the thirteenth-century avalanche's combat deaths were, as the second inquiry's theorem predicts, the smaller item; the larger was metabolic — the expulsions and emigrations that emptied the Guadalquivir heartlands of the population that *was* their economy, the repoblación that failed for generations to refill what it had emptied, the contraction of cities that had been the largest in Europe into garrison towns among the irrigation works of a vanished workforce. The registers, as always, do not permit a count; the shape — the kill arriving through coordination's collapse rather than the sword's edge — is the same shape this series has measured wherever registers exist.

And the strongest counter-position, held at the close, where this series always stations it: perhaps the structural method has, throughout this volume, underpriced belief itself. The counter-case would run: it was doctrine, not position, that made al-Mu'tamid choose Africa; doctrine that built the ribat and the Atlas community no mere tribal interest could have built; doctrine that brought Navarre's king and Rome's indulgences to a Castilian war; doctrine that made the frontier, alone of Europe's frontiers, a place where the wars could *always* be re-sacralised at need, for seven hundred years, until one final re-sacralisation — the subject of Volume III — burned the machine itself. The volume concedes the force of every clause, and replies with its record: that the same believers, under the same doctrines, traded, allied, served and spared across the line whenever position invited — which argues that doctrine functioned as this series has found legitimating belief functioning everywhere: not as a compulsion that dictates conduct, but as a resource that prices it — lowering the cost of some mobilisations, raising the cost of some surrenders, always available, never sufficient. But the project holds the reply as tested, not revealed, and names the discriminating

evidence, which is at hand. For in 1474 a queen took the throne of Castile for whom the word was not a resource, and under whom the entanglement of belief and position fused into something neither volume so far has seen: a state that closed the text, deleted the priced categories — and then, with the machine of this volume crated in its baggage, sailed west. On 2 January 1492 the last emir of Granada handed over the Alhambra under a capitulation of generous and detailed guarantees, in the tradition of Theodemir's treaty, of Toledo's, of Valencia's — sixty-seven articles of the old machine's best clauses. What became of those articles is the first exhibit of Volume III.

A Note on Sources

The project's method requires that load-bearing specifics — dates, figures, named institutions, treaty terms — be verified against current scholarship rather than asserted from memory or inherited from earlier drafts, and that the reader be told where the evidence is thin. The principal modern works consulted and relied upon for this volume include Hugh Kennedy, Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus; Bernard F. Reilly, The Kingdom of León-Castilla under King Alfonso VI and The Contest of Christian and Muslim Spain; Richard Fletcher, The Quest for El Cid and Moorish Spain, on the parias system and the documented Rodrigo Díaz; Joseph O'Callaghan, Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain, on the crusading apparatus and the thirteenth-century conquests; Maribel Fierro's studies of Ibn Tumart, Almohad doctrine and the forced conversions, with Amira Bennison, The Almoravid and Almohad Empires; Brian Catlos, Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom, and Robert I. Burns on the Valencian capitulations and Mudéjar society; L. P. Harvey, Islamic Spain 1250 to 1500, and Rachel Arié on Nasrid Granada; Allen Fromherz, Ibn Khaldun: Life and Times, with Franz Rosenthal's translation of the Muqaddimah; and Martín Ríos Saloma, La Reconquista: una construcción historiográfica, with Alejandro García-Sanjuán's critical studies, on the history of the word itself.

Where the volume reports a detail of chronicle-grade reliability — the shepherd of Las Navas, the intercession at Toledo's mosque, the founder's reply that became the Nasrid motto — it says so in the text at the point of use. Tribute figures are given as the documents record them; population and casualty magnitudes are given as the contested ranges they are. The conclusions throughout are the project's own; the sources supply the verified specifics on which a structural reading must stand or fall.